



*Embassy of the United States of America*  
American Citizen Services Branch  
24 Grosvenor Square  
London, W1A 2LQ

## **OBTAINING COPIES OF PUBLIC RECORDS IN GREAT BRITAIN**

### **1. Applications for Birth, Death, Marriage and Adoption Certificates by Mail, Telephone, Fax, E-Mail or Internet for England and Wales**

Certificates may be ordered through the Certificate Services Section of the UK General Register Office. Visit their website for details regarding the on-line ordering process: <http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificate/index.asp> You may also write to: Certificate Services Section General Register Office PO Box 2 Southport, Merseyside PR8 2JD Telephone: +44 (0) 845 603 7788 (8am to 8pm Monday to Friday. Saturday 9am to 4pm) Fax: +44 (0) 1704 550013 or E-mail [certificate.services@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:certificate.services@ons.gsi.gov.uk) Include "GQ" in the subject line of your email if you do not wish to receive an automated response.

On-line orders can be placed for any birth, marriage or death registered in England or Wales. Certificates can also be obtained for any adoption authorized by order of a court in England or Wales since 1927. Frequently asked questions regarding the online ordering process can be answered at

<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/faqs.asp>. Any other inquiries or problems with the online form can be sent to [col.admin@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:col.admin@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The fee for the online service is at minimum £7.00 but this can vary according to the amount of information supplied to the General Records Office and the type of service requested. Please check their website for fee details:

<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/fees.asp> . Online applications can be paid for by Visa, Mastercard, Switch, Delta, and Solo credit or debit cards and must be placed with a full postal address and valid email address.

Certificates ordered via mail, phone or fax cost slightly more than those ordered through the online form. If you choose to submit your application through one of these methods you can pay by sending an International Money Order IN STERLING made payable to ONS (Office for National Statistics) to the above address or by Visa, Mastercard, Switch, Delta or Solo credit or debit cards together with the appropriate application form, which can be found at:

Birth certificate - [http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/B0304\\_tcm69-11386.pdf](http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/B0304_tcm69-11386.pdf)

Marriage Certificate - [http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/B0324\\_tcm69-11387.pdf](http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/B0324_tcm69-11387.pdf)

Death Certificate - [http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/B0325%20A4\\_tcm69-11388.pdf](http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/B0325%20A4_tcm69-11388.pdf)

Adoption Certificate - [http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/pdf5\\_tcm69-3521.pdf](http://www.gro.gov.uk/Images/pdf5_tcm69-3521.pdf)

All certificates can be sent via standard mail or priority 24-hour service for a higher fee.

## **2. Applications for Birth, Death, Marriage and Adoption Certificates in Person for England and Wales**

a. Birth Certificates: To apply for a certificate in person you should go to The Family Records Centre, 1 Myddelton Street, London EC1R 1UW, Telephone: 0207-233-9233. Please call them to verify times and days of opening. You will need to know the person's full name, date and place of birth and the mother's maiden name. If you do not know the precise date of birth, you may conduct your own search for the appropriate record. The standard fee for a full or short birth certificate is £7.00 and for priority certificates (24 hour service) the fee is £23.00 for a full or short birth certificate. You may pay in cash when ordering in person as well as all credit, debit, cheque and money order.

b. Death Certificates: All the information in paragraph 2a applies. Provide the full name of deceased, date and place of death, age at death, and if known, occupation.

c. Marriage Certificates: All the information in paragraph 2a applies. Provide the full names of each party, date and place of marriage, name and occupation of father of both bride and groom.

d. Adoption Certificates: At the Family Records Centre you can access a copy of the Adoption Register. The fee for acquiring a full certificate of adoption is £7.00 or £5.50 for the short version with the 24 hour service costing £21.50.

## **3. Applications for Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates in Scotland**

The General Register Office for Scotland manages the records and documents related to births, deaths and marriages registered in Scotland. Applications may be made in person at New Register House, in writing, over the phone, in person at the local Registration office where the event was originally registered or via the Scottish genealogical research website <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>. New Register House is located at 3 West Register Street Edinburgh Scotland EH1 3YT and is available for family history research as well as applying for copies of certificates. In-person applications allow a 5-day standard processing time, or you may request same-day service for an additional fee. Written correspondence should be addressed to the Registrar, General Registry Office, New Register House, Edinburgh, Scotland EH1 3YT and include all relevant information. Orders by telephone can be placed at 0131-314-4411 Payment can be made with Visa, Mastercard, Maestro, sterling cheque and British postal order. Requests made in writing, over the phone or via the internet take longer than in-person requests, but can be expedited for a fee. Cash is only accepted when applying in person. The fee for a search and certificate will be at least £11 if the order is placed in person and £13 if by phone, mail or fax. You can write to the adoption unit at New Register House for information regarding adopted children and official documents. More details regarding the General

Register Office for Scotland and birth, death and marriage certificates can be found at <http://www.gro-44scotland.gov.uk/famrec/bdm/index.html>

#### **4. Applications for Birth, Death, Marriage and Adoption Certificates in Northern Ireland**

The General Register Office (Northern Ireland) manages the records and documents related to births, deaths and marriages registered in Northern Ireland. Applications may be made in person at the General Register Office, in writing, over the phone, or via the online forms found at <http://www.groni.gov.uk/index.htm>. Correspondence should be addressed to the General Register Office Oxford House 49-55 Chichester Street BELFAST BT1 4HL and include the appropriate application found on the above website. Phone orders are taken at (028) 90252000. Visa and Mastercard are accepted forms of payment for all methods, along with cheques in sterling, British postal orders and cash for in-person requests. The fee for any certificate will be at least £10, and more for expedited service. General questions can be answered by visiting the website, calling the above number or emailing [gro.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:gro.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk)

#### **5. Divorce Records for England and Wales**

If the applicant cannot remember, or does not have the information about the local County Court from where the divorce was granted, applications should be addressed to the Principal Registry of the Family Division, Divorce Registry, First Avenue House, 42-49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP, Telephone: 0207-936-6000 giving the case number, full names of both parties, date and place of divorce and date and place of marriage. Enclose an International Money Order IN STERLING and made payable to "H.M. Paymaster General" for the sum of £2.00 to receive a copy of the record. If the case number is not known and a search has been made the fee for the service is £20.00. If the record is not held in the Principal Divorce Registry, the registrar writes two letters; one to the applicant informing them of the appropriate court where the record is held, and the other to the court requesting that they make a record of the applicant's address urging them to contact the applicant.

#### **5. Wills, Grants of Representation and other Probate Documents for England and Wales**

For copies of wills and grants of representation, applications should be addressed to The Record Keeper, Probate Department, Principal Registry of the Family Division, First Avenue House, 42-49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP, Telephone: 0207-936-7022 stating the full name and address of the deceased and the date and place of death. An International Money Order IN STERLING for the sum of £5.00 and made payable to "H.M. Paymaster General" should be enclosed with the application. This includes the search fee. If a record is found, a certified copy of the record will be sent to you. If you require additional copies of the same document, an extra fee of 25 pence for each page of the record is charged.

Copies of probate documents can be obtained by writing to the York Probate Sub-Registry, Duncombe Place, York YO1 7EA enclosing an International Money Order for £2.00 with your application. Additional copies of the same document will be charged at 25 pence for each page of the record.

## **6. Wills, Grants of Confirmation and other Confirmation Documents in Scotland**

In Scotland the word for probate is confirmation. For applications from 1985, you should apply in writing only to the Commissary Clerk, H.M. Commissary Office, Sheriff Court House, 27 Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1LB, Telephone: 0131-225-2525, giving the deceased's full name and address of last residence, and date of death. An International Money Order IN STERLING for the sum of £6.00 and made payable to the "Sheriff Clerk Edinburgh" should be enclosed with the written application. This is merely a search fee and, if the record is found, the Commissary Clerk will send you an account giving the fees payable in order to receive certified copies of the documents.

For an application of a will, grant of confirmation and/or any other confirmation document PRIOR to 1985, please write or attend in person to The Scottish Record Office, 2 Princes Street, H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh EH1 3YY, Telephone: 0131 535-1352, supplying them with the full name and address of the deceased and the date of death. If they locate a record you will be advised with an estimate of cost in order to receive a copy.